

Joy to the world! the Lord is come!

Journey ends with 'love to survive'

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — Son Huu Phung is 18 years old. During the day he attends Banks High School. He makes a living working part time — four hours a day during the week, more on weekends. He is an unaccompanied minor — a Vietnamese refugee, under the age of 18, who arrived in the United States without a parent or legal guardian.

"Most people don't understand how this can happen," said Jean Jones, chairwoman of the Mayor's Task Force on Refugee Resettlement and member of Fairfield Heights Baptist Church. "Many times parents sent their children away for a better life. It takes a special love to send your child into an unknown situation — a special kind of desperation."

Son and his younger sister, Yume, began their journey to Birmingham five years ago. Their father, a school principal in Vietnam, refused to teach communism after the Communists captured South Vietnam in 1975. Realizing he didn't want his children growing up under communist rule, the father paid his brother to take Son, 14, and Yume, 13, out of the country.

A small fishing boat became their method of escape. After they reached the safety of international waters, a storm broke. Waves were "as tall as a house." To keep afloat, they threw all belongings overboard — including most of the water jars; they were four days without fresh water. "But we had enough love to survive," recalled Son.

They spent seven months in refugee camps before being sent to the United States. "My uncle promised he would help us, but at the camp he said nothing about his responsibility to us. When we got here, he went to Minnesota. We haven't seen him since," said Son.

When Son and Yume arrived in Birmingham, alone, no one met them. After several hours in the airport, they were picked up by a man from a resettlement agency. He took them to a house with nine other refugees with no food or heat. Within two months the resettlement office disbanded, and the children were alone again.

For six months Son and Yume lived with a family that treated them as servants. Admitted Son, "We didn't want to displease them. I wanted to leave, but I didn't know how."

Help came through Rebecca Peeples, a retired school teacher who taught him English as a second language at Woodlawn Baptist Church.

Through Peeples' example and patient teaching, Son accepted the Christian faith. He studied four weeks "about my obligation to being a Christian; then I was baptized."

When Son needed a home, Peeples called social agencies but could not get help because no one had legal custody of this young refugee.

She knew about another refugee, Hoa Kim Lam, a Laotian working as a translator for the Birmingham public school system. She arranged for Son to share his apartment. Members of Woodlawn church provided utensils, furniture, and other household items. The Birmingham Baptist Association paid their rent.

In an effort to provide housing and financial aid for other unaccompanied minors, the Birmingham association entered a legal battle. "The association concluded that either institutional care or foster homes was the answer to caring for these kids," explained Bill Rutledge, Alabama language missions leader. "But we couldn't get approval for either because the government refused to acknowledge the existence of unaccompanied minors in Alabama. It claimed the minors didn't exist."

Alabama's refusal to recognize the existence of these minors made it impossible for them to get health or life insurance or apply for financial aid to a college or to any other institution. And the legal red tape frustrated people willing to be foster parents.

Harris Cook, pastor of West End Baptist Church, became a victim of this frustration. In May 1983, Cook and his wife, Freda, opened their home to 17-year-old Yume. With her brother's blessings, the Cooks petitioned the courts to become Yume's legal guardians.

On December 1, 1983, their uphill battle was won and the Cooks became Yume's legal guardians. "This was the first acknowledgement of unaccompanied minors the state has made," explained Cook. "It will mean so much to Yume and to us." The decision also makes it easier for other unaccompanied minors to have their status legalized and benefits awarded.

For Son, life in the U.S. as an unaccompanied minor has not been easy, but he has few complaints. In March, at the Cook's invitation, he moved to their home, where he will live until he enters Samford University. Reunited with his sister, he is not alone for the first time in years and has more than "enough love to survive."

The

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Christmas in Israel

Like youngsters everywhere, children of Baptist families in Israel find special happiness at Christmas. The pageant at Baptist Village in Petah Tiqva features children of refugees once housed at the George W. Truett Home. Pastor Suhail Ramadan narrates. Each year about 20 of the former refugees gather for a reunion the week after Christmas. (FMB) PHOTO By Don Rutledge

What Is Christmas?

Is it hurry! hurry! Shop and scurry,
Making a lot of bills and also worry.
"Will this present do for Sue?
Is Grandma's dress size twenty-two?
Billy and John want Atari sets —
But how in the world will we pay these debts?"
It is Mama in the kitchen cooking and baking,
With frayed nerves, and a head that's aching?
What IS Christmas, real and true?
What does the day mean to you?
—Christmas is none of the above, but rather,
It's the unselfish Love of the Heavenly Father,
Who sent His only Son to sinful earth,
Here to endure a lowly birth;
It's Jesus freely giving up His glory,
To come and incarnate the Christmas story.

It's Mary's Submission to the Father's will;
It's the Obedience of shepherds upon a hill,
Who heard the angels' message and quickly
Said,
"Let's go and find the Babe in His bed."
It's Wise Men's Faith who came from afar,
Led to the Christ by the glow of a star.
It's good Joseph's Hope, who in his heart
Knew,
That what God had promised that He would do.
Christmas is Submission, humble and complete,
It's Faith that causes one to kneel at His
Feet;
It's Obedience like the Shepherds', who
Hurried on their way,
To find the Christ that first Christmas day.
It's Hope that rests in the Father above,
Christmas is Christ — And Christ is Love.
—Lois P. Harlow
Meridian

Season's Greetings

"The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." -- Phil. 4:23

Editorials by don mcgregor

Can we observe Christmas?

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," the Apostle John tells us.

That is a startling statement, but the apostle is adamant about it. He says in addition, "All things were made by him" . . . and adds "in him was life; and the life was the light of men."

Then he makes the most startling statement of all: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . ."

What a glorious thought! God himself had taken on the conditions of mankind in order to be able to show us the way.

Readers may want to refer to the short story about birds on page 7.

What can be said but to repeat the chorus of the heavenly host that praised God on that night by saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Or to echo the oft-repeated refrain

from Handel's Messiah: "Hallelujah!"

It was a glorious time; and John adds parenthetically, "and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father . . ." Then he adds his final description of the Savior: "full of grace and truth."

We read the scripture, we sing about it, and we find it on Christmas cards as we follow Luke's account: "And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

And we treat it almost as if we were reading a novel or singing of some mythical condition.

But these are facts, and the world is depending on these facts to for its well-being. These facts need to come alive in our hearts and in our very beings as we live from day to day.

This is the condition of Christmas. Whether or not he was born on Dec. 25 some 2,000 years ago is not the major element in the drama. The main thing is that he was born, that he took on human form to be our redeemer; and we have chosen Dec. 25 as the day to observe this.

So now all the world observes Christmas and is aware of its meaning. Though the world may pervert its meaning, the world knows what it is. What a witnessing opportunity! But how easy it is to get caught up in the world's bustle over Christmas and miss the opportunity of showing the world what the true significance is.

"Glory to God," the heavenly host said. This is the starting place. It is a time for praise, for worship, and for thanksgiving. As Paul wrote to the members of the church at Corinth, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift."

But then the heavenly host spoke words that should sink deep into our hearts and convict us of the most

serious transgression of all against the spirit of Christmas among those who have accepted the redemption that was made possible. The heavenly body rang out in chorus, "And on earth peace." And we fail so miserably. Where do we find peace? Is there any place on earth where there is not conflict among men or the fear of conflict if there is none? Is there peace in our own hearts?

"Good will toward men," said the host just before departure.

These are not just words. In those Bethlehem hills on that occasion a heavenly host, sent from God himself, said on the occasion when God took upon himself the form of a man, "Good will toward men."

We must find a way to accomplish that. How can we observe Christmas otherwise?

For 2,000 years mankind has not been able to find the way to peace and good will. Will we do any better now? Perhaps we will not individually be able to change a nation or a world, but we can be responsible for our own hearts.

If we are to observe the birth of Christ, we must find peace and good-will toward others within ourselves.

The BAPTIST RECORD wishes for all of its readers the peace that only life with Christ can provide.

Don McGregor
Tim Nicholas
Anne McWilliams
Evelyn Keyes
Florence Larrimore
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Gail Wood

Guest opinion . . .

New light on Roman governors of Samaria

By Jerry Vardaman

In 1908-1910, an American excavation team worked at Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom in the Old Testament period. One graduate of Southern Seminary was on his team, David Gordon Lyon.

The other Americans were G. Reisner and C. Fisher. They found many inscriptions relating to the Old Testament period. These inscriptions were written on pottery, and the entire collections today are known as the "Samaria Ostraca." They are written in Hebrew and throw great light on the geography and economic conditions that prevailed in the Northern Kingdom just before its final fall ca. 722/721 B.C.

One Greek inscription which this team found is just as important as any of the Samaria Ostraca just mentioned. It is a neglected inscription and has never received the attention which it deserves because of its fragmentary condition. It is mentioned in the splendid excavation report entitled *Harvard Excavations at Samaria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), I. p. 250, no. 7; II, p. 59, photo "C." We give here a drawing of that text and a suggested reconstruction of it as best as we can determine as to how it should be restored, though the reader should understand that naturally some doubts remain as to the exact way it should be read, especially in line 2. Line 1 is much more certain, and mentions two generals who later became procurators of Judea just before Pilate himself served.

(Suggested Restored Translation: "While Annius Rufus and Valerius Gratus were jointly serving as generals, King Herod gave a temple to the Great Kore (in his 27th year?)."

As mentioned, line 2 of the text is so poorly preserved that one can not be absolutely sure as to how it should be restored. It is highly probable that it does mention a Temple of Kore, the main goddess of the Samaritans. Another possibility is that it mentions the permission of the Samaritan community in erecting this building where the inscription was found. Thus there are uncertainties.

If it is the temple of Kore where this

text was discovered, it is the first time that its location can be determined in the Roman period. We have known for several years, due to excavations at Samaria, where the temple of Kore was located in the Hellenistic period and in the Byzantine period, but we have not known the location of that place in the early Roman period. Simon Magus (Acts 8) could have been a functionary of that cult, since he served that power which was called Great (Acts 8:9,10).

But it is line 1 of this text which is quite clear and important. For most of our information on the procurators who served in Judea we are totally dependent on Josephus. Also, he tells as a great deal about Gratus and Rufus, now that we can understand this text. We have not known that Rufus and Gratus were the same men that Josephus mentions by the same names as serving as generals of the military troops in Samaria (War II. 52, 58, 63; Ant. XVII. 266) when Herod I died. The inscription we just restored shows that the men with the same names are the same persons, since Josephus tells us that the Roman Procurator named Rufus was named "Annius Rufus" and the inscription mentions that the general of the army in Samaria (or Sebaste, as it was called in the Roman period) was also named Annius Rufus. The verb, which is sufficiently preserved to indicate that two generals at least are referred to, is a plural and some other name besides Rufus must be restored. The certainty is almost absolute that the missing name is that of Gratus. Thus these two generals had deep roots in Samaria; and Josephus records no uprisings of the Samaritans against them, likely because of their long association with Samaritans.

Pilate on the other hand was fired because of troubles which he had with the Samaritans (Ant. XVIII. 85-89). The procurator Coponius, who served just before Rufus and Gratus, also could have been fired because of troubles with Samaritans (Ant. XVIII. 29-30). Rufus and Gratus had roots in Samaria and were obviously well-respected leaders there. Here is new light to help us understand another little corner of NT history!

Jerry Vardaman, a member of First Church, Starkville, is a professor in the Cobb Institute of Archaeology of Mississippi State University.

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NANNE AWKE NTH K OF THH GAH BACIAE YCH PWA PCKZ



Officers for the National Council of Bivocational Ministries were re-elected during the organization's annual meeting in December in Jackson. From left to right, they are Ralph Halbrooks, Alabama, president; Don Evans, Missouri, vice-president; James Nelson, Alabama, director; and John Saunders, Florida, director. At right is Dale Holloway, Jackson, national consultant for bivocational ministries for the Home Mission Board.

Nation's bivocationalists meet in Jackson

The National Council on Bivocational Ministries drew participants from 15 states scattered from Oregon to Florida to its second annual meeting during December in Jackson, Mississippi.

The event, coordinated by Dale Holloway, the national consultant for bivocational ministries for the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, featured videotape and live presentations documenting the importance of bivocational ministers to Bold Mission Thrust.

The videotapes addressed the dedication and determination of bivocationalists to do "Whatever It Takes" to succeed in the work that God has called them to accomplish in ministering to his people and reaching those who are not yet his people. Two videotapes, consisting of presentations made at first annual conference on BiVos last December, addressed an issue of importance to the ministers and their spouses—"Our Struggle For Acceptance."

Holloway said, "I think these tapes will be available resources all across the SBC in college and seminar classes such as those dealing with foundations for ministry and field industry. They also are tremendously effective communications tools for Bivocational Conferences or Fellowships and Associational Meetings."

Holloway advised the council that another videotape, "Ministers in the Marketplace," is now available to help in sharing the opportunities available for bivocational ministers. Each state convention has been sent a copy through Video Tape Services. Anyone desiring a copy may contact their state convention media section.

Jack Washington, a researchist at the Home Mission Board in Atlanta, presented a statistical study of bivocational pastors and churches in the SBC based on information supplied by the churches in their Uniform Church Letters for 1983.

Washington summarized his research as follows:

Bivocational pastors are concentrated in the central part of the nation.

Only seven state conventions indicated an increase in the number of

bivocational pastors—others were down—resulting in a slight net decrease.

Those areas that need new churches the most have the least number of BV pastors. Therefore a Home Mission Board strategy is needed to encourage placement of BiVos in these areas.

BV pastors are particularly effective in new congregations.

The effectiveness of BV ministry is highlighted by bivocational churches surpassing the churches with non-BiVos in baptism rate, additions rate, Sunday School enrollment, and attendance rate per 100 resident members.

The Home Mission Board needs to continue legitimizing the role of BV pastors, most of whom are well educated; but their training is not seminary training.

The Home Mission Board cannot accomplish the promotion by BV pastors alone. Seminaries and Bible institutes must share key roles also.

Woven throughout the entire council was a sharing of activities and emphases that result in complementing the lives and ministries of BiVos.

The participation of four BiVos from across the convention provided realism to the meeting. Gary Shirley reported on how he organized a fellowship of BiVos in Mobile, Ala. Jerry Smith of Red River, N. M., shared excerpts from his recently completed doctrinal paper—"Strengthening a Small Church Through a Staff of Bivocationalists." Ken Cook, of Jackson, was the producer and narrator of the video "Whatever It Takes." Both Cook and Dale Holloway, the council coordinator, are Mississippi Bivocational Pastors.

The officers of the National Council were re-elected for another one year term each. President Ralph Halbrooks is director of the Associational Missions Department, Alabama Baptist Convention, Montgomery. Vice-President Don Evans is a consultant, Missouri Baptist Convention, Jefferson City, Mo. Director James Nelson is director of missions for Marshall Association, Albertville, Ala.; and director John Saunders is director of the Cooperative Missions Department in Florida.

The Baptist Record

Students organize in Waco for information

By Karen Benson

WACO, Texas (BP)—Paul McCoury feels most high school and college-age Southern Baptists are ignorant about Southern Baptist history and heritage, about current denominational issues and about future goals of the convention.

McCoury, a senior religion and journalism major at Baylor University and executive director of the Informed Baptist Students, hopes the recently formed "independent grassroots information movement" will change things.

The group plans to distribute information to Southern Baptist youth providing factual information about Southern Baptists. Even if nothing else is communicated, IBS is devoted to informing students about Southern Baptists' long-term beliefs in the priesthood of the believer, the autonomy of the local church, and the separation of church and state, he said.

IBS student leaders also are encouraging fellow students to consider becoming messengers from their local churches to the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas in June 1985. Their goal is to have 500 registered messengers who are college or seminary students.

During the convention, IBS will offer daily meetings geared for college-age messengers and student observers. The meetings will be held at Gaston Avenue Baptist Church in Dallas and will be "open meetings where we will present the items to be voted upon that day," McCoury said. "We will represent all candidates and all points of view."

Topical issues also will be discussed at the meetings, such as religious liberty, the priesthood of the believer, local church autonomy and individual involvement in the Cooperative Program. Guest speakers who already have committed to address these issues include James Sullivan, former president of the Baptist Sunday School Board; Bob Maddox, newly elected executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State; and Chester Swor, Christian author and speaker from Jackson, Miss.

Formed just a few months ago, IBS now has a newsletter mailing list of more than 1,500. Its 15-member board of directors represents such colleges as Hardin-Simmons University, Oklahoma Baptist University, East Texas Baptist University, Houston Baptist University and state colleges in Colorado, Texas and California.

By February, IBS expects to have chapters established in every Southern Baptist school in Texas. Plans are to branch out across the country from there.

McCoury emphasizes the organization is not affiliated or aligned with any "political faction" within the SBC. In fact, some of the IBS officers are on "opposite ends of the denominational spectrum," McCoury said. "Sometimes our 15-minute of ficer meetings turn into three-hour sessions," he said.

During the organizational stages, the IBS student leaders have consulted with adult leaders from both sides of the denominational controversy, McCoury said. "We recognize that we are young, inexperienced students who are striving to educate ourselves in our personal discipleship and involvement in local Southern Baptist churches," he said.

"We realize the importance of consulting with older and wiser Christian servants—ministers, Baptist Student Union directors and denominational leaders. But we do not want to represent a particular side on any specific issue."

IBS student leaders have visited with Houston Judge Paul Pressler; Baylor President Herbert Reynolds; William Rogers, dean of the School of Christian Education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and James Landes, former executive

director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas who is distinguished visiting professor of religion at Baylor; and many others.

"Our generation of students is suffering from the syndrome of expecting simple answers to complex questions," McCoury said. "Many students are blindly following statements made by denominational leaders without personal contemplation and prayer."

Since college and seminary students are the "future leaders of the SBC," it is imperative they become much more knowledgeable about Southern Baptists, he said.

McCoury is excited about the role young Southern Baptists can play in the denomination. "The younger generation does, indeed, have a message of unity brought about by Christlike love. The young should have a voice in denominational policies," he said. "We don't have all the answers, but we have a cause."

IBS headquarters is located in Waco, Texas. Mailing address is P.O. Box 6231, Waco, Texas 76706. Phone number is (817) 752-3322.

Karen Benson is on the Baylor Public Relations staff.

Suits needed for Northern Plains

By Linda Douglas

Baptist Men of Mississippi have enjoyed the opportunity of sending new suits to pastors of the Northern Plains Baptist Convention at Christmas time for the last 22 years. Since this convention has been a pioneer area of Southern Baptists work, this seemed a good way for us to let the pastors in the area know that we care about them and support them in their labors for our Lord.

Each year a different state in Northern Plains is selected to receive suits. In 1983 Montana received 80 suits for their pastors. The Alabama Baptist Men have picked up on sending suits to pastors in Wyoming, as they have a partnership with this state. Mississippi Baptist Men will be sending suits this year to pastors in North Dakota, South Dakota, and new pastors in Montana.

The suits sent to pastors consist of a three piece suit and a shirt or a tie. These suits are purchased by the Brotherhood Department at a cost of \$125 each.

Baptist Men groups or individuals can participate in this project by sending their gifts payable to the Brotherhood Department, P. O. Box

530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please designate on your check, Northern Plains Suit Fund.

The pastors in the Northern Plains Baptist Convention are very appreciative for the thoughtfulness and generosity of the Baptist Men in Mississippi. Please read the following letter from one such pastor who received a suit last year.

"Thank you so much for your considerate gift of a new suit. It is truly an answer of prayer.

"Being called to a bi-vocational ministry, there just doesn't seem to be much money left for the 'necessities' such as a new suit. You have no idea how much this means to me. We're so grateful for the link that unites us with our brothers in Mississippi and for the support, both prayerful and otherwise, that you give us.

"We pray that God will continue to bless you for your faithfulness and your considerable help to us in Montana.

Yours in Christ,
Steve Jessen"

Linda Douglas is a secretary in the Brotherhood Department.

Church growth series: at 32 Whistlestops

A statewide series of Church Growth Whistlestop Conferences has been planned by the Mississippi Baptist Sunday School Department beginning Jan. 14 and concluding Feb. 1. Conferences will be held in 32 locations in an effort to interpret Sunday School growth plans, according to Keith Wilkinson, director of the Sunday School Department.

Conference leaders include Tim Holcomb, Growth Consultant from the Baptist Sunday School Board; James Berthelot, Adult Consultant, BSSB; Eugene Skelton, Growth Consultant, BSSB; Jean Burton, Preschool Specialist, Memphis, TN; Jimmy McLeod, Roanoke, TX; Sue Rother, Lafayette, LA; Barbara Taylor, Crystal Springs; Ina Gordon, Waynesboro; Jim Dalrymple, West Point; Richard Spencer, Blue Mountain; Milton Burd, Cleveland; Ken Marler, Houston; Ed Hinkson, Arkansas; Peggy Ward, Vicksburg; Carol Williams, Clinton; Charles and Betty Davis, Laurel; and Barry Hardy, Crystal Springs as well as the state Sunday School staff.

The two and one-half hour conference will interpret a variety of growth projects and promotion plans. "These growth ideas can be used immediately to help Sunday Schools get back on the growth track, or to continue growth momentum," states Wilkinson.

Pastors, Sunday School and Outreach Directors, department directors, teachers, Cradle Roll, and Homebound workers will benefit from



Holcomb



Skelton

the conference. "We have the opportunity for Sunday School growth in nearly all churches. There are people in our church communities who can be reached if we will prepare for them and go after them. Sometimes a Sunday School needs a shot in the arm of motivation and the ideas and plans for doing something about it. I believe the Church Growth Whistlestops can help," further states Wilkinson.

November surge brightens Cooperative Program picture

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — November contributions of \$9,693,000 through the national Cooperative Program have brightened the budget picture for the worldwide mission and education programs of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The November 1984 figures were 20.87 percent (\$1,673,565) above 1983

"Friends Forever" was the theme of "Celebration for Service" Dec. 9 for David R. Grant and his family, marking his retirement as pastor of Broadmoor Church, Jackson.

Events for several weeks were directed toward efforts to show the congregation's appreciation for its pastor of 26 years. Billboards and bumper-stickers proclaimed the message.

The women of the church honored Mrs. Grant with a tea for "Broadmoor's First Lady" in the home of Reuben Greene, deacon chairman. They presented her a silver tray framed in an antique shadow box.

The deacons and staff and their wives on Dec. 8 hosted a banquet for the Grants at the Mississippi Farm Bureau Building on Ridgewood Road. Special music was favorite music of Grant, and testimonials to the many and varied aspects of his ministry through the years were given. The deacons presented him a watch and a cash gift.

Speakers in the morning services Dec. 9 included Bob Hamblin of the

Home Mission Board and Earl Kelly, executive secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, both long-time friends and associates of Grant.

The real celebration for service began with a reception in the

Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; David Grant, Jr., representing the family; and J. W. Brister, executive director-treasurer of Hinds-Madison Association.

Special music for the service included the Grant's daughter and son-



The David Grant family gathered for his retirement service Dec. 9 at Broadmoor Church, Jackson. The John Perkins family is at the left. The Jerry Mahons are at the right. The David Grant Jr. family is standing behind the Grants.

Fellowship Hall of the church Sunday afternoon. A steady flow of friends and acquaintances from Jackson and surrounding cities and even other states came to express their appreciation for the life and ministry of this couple.

Following the reception, all of the events climaxed in the "Celebration for Service" in the sanctuary of the church. Speakers included Dale Danks, mayor of Jackson, who proclaimed the day as "David Grant Day;" Cooper Walton, chairman of the pulpit committee which brought Grant to Broadmoor; Tom Hudson, former staff member and pastor of Oak Forest Church, Jackson; Howard Spell, representing Mississippi College; Roy Honeycutt, president of

in-law, John and Sarah Perkins, missionaries to France; Mrs. Jerry Mahon, their daughter; and the church choir's rendition of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "The Hallelujah Chorus." Grant was presented a check toward his annuity from the congregation and a framed calligraphy proclaiming him pastor emeritus.

During Grant's ministry, the membership of the church has grown from 858 to 3,795; the budget from \$108,013 to \$2,154,680; Cooperative Program gifts from 10 percent of the budget to 23 percent; a staff of five to a staff of 26 and 58 other workers. The original square footage of the church was approximately 17,000 and is now approximately 130,000.

receipts for the same month. Two months into the 1984-85 fiscal year, the national Cooperative Program has received almost \$18.3 million, 9.84 percent ahead of the first two months last fiscal year.

The figures provided good news to balance a somber October report when voluntary contributions from the 37 state conventions affiliated with the SBC were \$8.6 million. In order to meet the 1984-85 basic operating budget of \$118 million, the national Cooperative Program must average more than \$9.83 million each month.

November 1984 receipts were a monthly record and marked the first time November contributions had passed the \$9 million mark. The first time the month had broken the \$8 million mark was 1983 (\$8,019,435).

National Cooperative Program receipts are distributed among 20 Southern Baptist institutions, according to a formula approved by messengers to the annual meeting of the convention.

One-half of all income goes to the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., and 19.7 percent goes to the Home Mission Board in Atlanta. The six Southern Baptist seminaries (in California, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina and Texas) share 20.6 percent.

The remaining 9.7 percent is split among the Executive Committee, the Annuity Board, the Southern Baptist Foundation, Commission on American Theological Seminary, the Brotherhood Commission, the Christian Life Commission, the Education Commission, the Historical Commission, the Radio-Television Commission, the Stewardship Commission and the Public Affairs Committee.

After two months, 31 of the 37 state conventions have increased their giving through the national Cooperative Program from last year. Seven conventions already have given more than \$1 million.

Locations, times — Whistlestops

January	Church	City	Time
14	First	Pascagoula	9:30 a.m.-noon
	First	Hazlehurst	9:30 a.m.-noon
	First	Lucedale	7 to 9:30 p.m.
	First	Magee	7 to 9:30 p.m.
15	Grace Memorial	Gulfport	9:30 a.m.-noon
	West Laurel	Laurel	9:30 a.m.-noon
	Pearl River Assoc. Office	Carriere	7 to 9:30 p.m.
	Calvary	Waynesboro	7 to 9:30 p.m.
16	Poplar Springs Dr.	Meridian	9:30 a.m.-noon
	28th Avenue	Hattiesburg	9:30 a.m.-noon
17	Forest	Forest	9:30 a.m.-noon
	First	Columbia	9:30 a.m.-noon
	Morrison Hgts.	Clinton	7 to 9:30 p.m.
	First	Summit	7 to 9:30 p.m.
18	First	Natchez	9:30 a.m.-noon
	First	Vicksburg	9:30 a.m.-noon
28	First	Philadelphia	9:30 a.m.-noon
	First	Yazoo City	9:30 a.m.-noon
	Emmanuel	Grenada	7 to 9:30 p.m.
	Parkway	Kosciusko	7 to 9:30 p.m.
29	N. Greenwood	Greenwood	9:30 a.m.-noon
	Ackerman	Ackerman	9:30 a.m.-noon
	Second	Greenville	7 to 9:30 p.m.
	First	Columbus	7 to 9:30 p.m.
30	Lee Baptist Church	Tupelo	9:30 a.m.-noon
	Oakhurst	Clarksdale	9:30 a.m.-noon
31	First	Batesville	9:30 a.m.-noon
	First	Corinth	9:30 a.m.-noon
	First	Holly Springs	7 to 9:30 p.m.
	First	Oxford	7 to 9:30 p.m.
February			
1	Pittsboro	Pittsboro	9:30 a.m.-noon
	Parkway	Hernando	9:30 a.m.-noon

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"100 per cent of Lottie Moon gets to the mission field"

By Carol Sisson Garret

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — Southern Baptists called in questions with worldwide scope during the first international foreign missions teleconference. Concerns ranged from what the denomination was doing in famine-stricken Ethiopia to provisions being made for missionaries in war-torn Nicaragua.

Lay leaders from Mississippi, North Carolina, and West Virginia took part in missions discussion. Interspersed with these discussions were live calls from missionaries in the Middle East and Hong Kong.

The teleconference was broadcast over the Baptist Telecommunication Network. Viewers gathered at more than 100 sites across the country to take part via satellite in interaction between top missions leaders, missionaries and lay leaders.

The project of Woman's Missionary Union and the Foreign Mission Board was designed to launch the Dec. 2-9 Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

The teleconference originated in Birmingham, Ala., with a talk show-type format. Carolyn Weatherford, WMU executive director, and James Smith, Brotherhood president, joined Parks fielding telephone calls from audience participants. Moderator was Bill O'Brien, FMB executive vice-president.

Fifteen of the many calls received were aired. Several viewers called in asking Parks about what was being done in Ethiopia and what they could do to help. Parks said having missionaries on the field in Ethiopia has

enabled the FMB to transfer the money immediately and to relieve some of the pressing needs within a day's time from when help was asked.

"We already have transferred over \$200,000 in the last few days to assist in feeding people and to continue in what we've started through our missionaries who are stationed in Ethiopia," Parks said. He added the

Marty Perkins, WMU director from Moss Point, Miss., stressed the importance of the Week of Prayer. She directly attributed the calling of three missionary couples from her church to these weeks of prayer. "We've learned to shoot high, and God has supplied all the resources for us," she said.

FMB had been doing agricultural missions in Ethiopia, trying to head off famine, long before the crisis was known to the American public.

The most significant thing Southern

Baptists can do to help, according to Parks, is to continue to support the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, keeping the missionaries in place, "so we can respond to urgent need in Ethiopia and other places."

Weatherford pointed out 100 percent of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering gets to the mission field. "Not any of it is used to promote the offering. Not any of it is used for administrative costs at the FMB. All of it goes directly to the foreign mission field."

Speaking live from Hong Kong, foreign missionary Gerald Hale told one caller the future looked good for missions work there.

The 1997 transition from British Colonial rule to the People's Republic of China has caused uncertainty about what would happen to missions endeavors. Hale said present signs were they would be able to continue their open evangelization, expand their missions and stay in Hong Kong. Hale and other missionaries involved in the teleconference shared current prayer concerns with the audience.

Marty Perkins, WMU director from Moss Point, Miss., also stressed the importance of the Week of Prayer. She directly attributed the calling of three missionary couples from her church to these weeks of prayer. "We've learned to shoot high, and God has supplied all the resources for us," she said.

O'Brien closed with a challenge to have a lifestyle which would further the cause of Christ throughout the world.

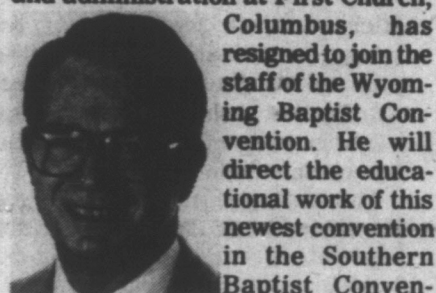
Garrett writes for WMU.



GETTING READY — Tami Mays (standing), floor manager for WBRC-TV in Birmingham, Ala., adjusts microphone wires on R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. With him are James Smith, president of the Brotherhood Commission, Carolyn Weatherford, Woman's Missionary Union executive director, and Bill O'Brien, executive vice president for the Foreign Mission Board. The group participated in the first foreign missions teleconference, held Dec. 1. (BP) PHOTO By Warren Johnson

Hardy will direct education for Baptists in Wyoming

William E. Hardy Jr., for the past eleven years minister of education and administration at First Church,



Columbus, has resigned to join the staff of the Wyoming Baptist Convention. He will direct the educational work of this newest convention in the Southern Baptist Convention, specifically in areas of Sunday School, Church Training, and church administration.

The Wyoming Convention is made up of 61 churches and 27 missions, with headquarters in Casper.

Hardy is a native of Mississippi. Prior to Columbus, he served First Church, Kosciusko, and Woodland Hills Church, Jackson.

Hardy has served as chairman of the SBC Brotherhood Commission and is presently a member of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

He is married to the former Barbara Given of Ripley, Tenn. Their three children are Barry, who serves

First Church, Crystal Springs, as minister of education; Beverly (Mrs. Cliff Coleman of Clinton); and Bruce, a music student at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth.

Hardy will begin his new work in Wyoming on Jan. 1.

Pastor's wife dies

Geri Smith, wife of Dwight Smith, pastor of West Ellisville Church, Ellisville, died Dec. 17 following a lengthy illness. She had been confined to a hospital since early November and in intensive care for most of that time.

Jones Funeral Home of Ellisville was in charge of arrangements. The funeral services were Dec. 19 at West Ellisville Church.

Besides her husband, Mrs. Smith is survived by three children. There is a daughter, Angie, 20, and two teen-aged boys, Brian and Bruce. Her mother is Mrs. Susie Walley of Richton.

Smith has been pastor of the West Ellisville Church for about 2½ years. Though both were Mississippi natives, he had been pastor in Florida before returning to the state to assume the West Ellisville pastorate.

Honeycutt pleads for autonomy

Roy Honeycutt, president of Southern Seminary, addressed a group of some 200 Mississippi Baptist church people on Dec. 10 following a weekend visit to Jackson for an occasion honoring Broadmoor pastor David Grant on his retirement from the pastorate.

Honeycutt was one of a number of Southern Baptist and Mississippi Baptist personalities who participated in the Dec. 9 services of appreciation for Grant at the conclusion of his pastorate at Broadmoor.

Much of Honeycutt's address on Monday at a luncheon meeting at Calvary Church, Jackson, centered on the ministry of Southern Seminary. As was to be expected, however, his remarks turned toward the controversy among Southern Baptists and the involvement of himself and Southern Seminary.

Honeycutt noted that Southern Baptists have "something unique in the history of American Christianity" in its missions sending agency, the Cooperative Program. He pointed out that 20 percent of all seminary students to the United States and Canada are in Southern Baptist seminaries and that they are committed to missions and committed to a

congregational emphasis.

"They have come from you and have been endorsed by local Baptist churches," he said. "This is an exciting time because of the quality of the students and because of the quality of the faculty," he added.

Honeycutt asked, however "Why will Southern Baptists create our own ruins?" He declared that Southern Baptists are in the process of wrenching apart what has taken 139 years to build—the Southern Baptist Convention.

He noted that Southern Baptists seem to be on a bridge that leads to nowhere and "we're even trying to push one another off of the bridge." He pleaded for latitude under the doctrines of the priesthood of the believer, soul competency, and the autonomy of the local church.

"The convention cannot dictate from the top down," he said. "Orthodoxy flows from the bottom up. The convention cannot settle what you believe."

We have a mandate to know the history and the heritage of the Southern Baptist Convention, he added. And, he said, "We must live in unity but not in uniformity."

"I am not saying that it is not important what you believe," he

declared. "It is critically important." But the convention is the banding of ourselves together to do missions, he said.

"We must act with integrity and honor among brethren," he added.

He pled for "the responsibility under God of maintaining our heritage bought at such a price." "We need every part of the Southern Baptist Convention," he said. "Instead of talking in terms of left and right, let's keep in the middle. We can move together if we maintain our heritage," he concluded.

He noted that Southern Seminary has demanded faculty accountability and adherence to the abstract of principles.

Recipe for A Merry Christmas

Take the crisp cold of a December night, add two generous parts of snow, stir in air so clear it tinkles. Into a generous heart, mix the wonder of a little girl, the sparkle of a young boy's glance, the love of parents, and set gently before the chimney side. Add the lightest touch of a reindeer's hooves, a sprig of holly, a scent of fir. Set the mixture to rise in the warmth of a dream of good will to men. It will be almost ready to serve when it bubbles with warmth and good feeling. Bedeck with the light of a star set in the East, garnish with shining balls of gold, silver and red. Serve to the tune of an ancient carol in the middle of the family table. This recipe is sufficient for all the men and women you will ever meet.

\$30 million drive launched by DBU

DALLAS (BP) — Dallas Baptist University has launched a "Campaign for Greatness" fund raising drive aimed at generating \$30 million during the next three years.

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Extraordinary gifts that count

By Betty Henderson

*The light shines
in the darkness,
and the darkness
has never put it out.*

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matthew 2:1-2).

It's that time of year again — Christmas! Just the thought of it stirs up a myriad of pictures: church choirs, family gatherings, gifts, tinsel, aromatic trees, delicious smells coming from the kitchen, and children's bright eyes dancing as though they were Prancer or Vixen.

Christmas means many things to many people. But, we would admit that the one aspect that rises above all others is the giving of gifts. Christmas has become synonymous with giving. True, it has been exploited by some, but after all, what is greater than giving? Especially if we are more concerned with the reasons behind giving, and not with the WHAT of giving.

The wise men teach us a great lesson on giving. On that first Christmas so many years ago, people responded in different ways just as we do today. Let's look at three groups of important people and how they

responded to the Good News of the Babe born under the strange star.

Herod responded in fear and jealousy. The chief priests were indifferent about it; they were too busy reciting their rituals and teaching their theology. They were like children playing in the marketplace while the greatest event in history was happening before their eyes. But, the wise men responded with adoration and worship.



One of them brought gold. It seems an odd gift, in a stable, in a cave, where a Galilean carpenter and his wife guarded their child, but not so strange, when we understand the significance of it. In that time, those who came to see a king never came without a gift — and the most appropriate gift for a king was a gift of the most precious metal. Crowns and

scepters were made of gold. These wise one was saying with his gift that nothing was too precious to give to this King.

The second to the Magi brought a gift of frankincense — a costly white aromatic gum from trees of the same name. It was used by the priests as a sweet perfume in temple worship and sacrifices — so it was the perfect gift for the Priest of Priests lying in the straw.

The third of the wise men brought myrrh. Myrrh! It was an ingredient of Israel's holy anointing oil and in the purification rites. It was given to Jesus to relieve his pain on the cross, and used by those who prepared his body for burial. Consider the greatest Giver — God. He knows a lot about giving. On that very first Christmas he gave just as the prophet foretold. "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given" (Isa 9:6). God went to the limit. In love, he gave his best for us.

The Magi came a long, long way to place their gifts at the feet of the Babe, and the gifts they gave were symbolic of their hungering faith. We would do well to imitate them, giving to him and offering him the best we have.

What would that be? What would he want?

He wants our prayers.
He wants our willingness to walk with Him daily.

He wants us to reach out our hands to help others.

He wants our love for him expressed in 365 days of service offered in imitation of him.

He wants our hands and our hearts — perhaps most, our hearts.

Betty (Mrs. Fred) Henderson lives at Brandon.

Thought for love

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. But, if you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglement; lock it up safely in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket-safe, dark, motionless, airless-it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. — C. S. Lewis.

"The formula of civilization is liberty limited by law." — J. B. Gambrell

Stanley's church doubles Cooperative Program gifts

ATLANTA (BP)—Fulfilling a pledge made earlier this year by Southern Baptist Convention President Charles Stanley, First Baptist Church of Atlanta voted to double its gifts to Southern Baptist missions through the denomination's Cooperative Program.

The congregation adopted a 1985 budget of \$4.75 million, which is identical in total amount to the 1984 budget, but allocates \$250,000 instead of \$122,000 to the SBC Cooperative Program.

Earlier this year in a meeting with Baptist editors, Stanley, pastor of the church since 1971, said he had challenged the church's budget committee to increase Cooperative Program giving to at least five percent.

Fred Powell, senior associate pastor of the church, confirmed that the church had responded favorably to Stanley's challenge. Powell said

the church budgets its Cooperative Program allocation on a dollar amount rather than a percentage basis.

Powell said earlier reports the church gives 2.1 percent of SBC missions throughout the Cooperative Program were in error. The percentage is actually 2.6 percent for 1984, and 5.2 percent for 1985, Powell explained.

He added that this year First Baptist, Atlanta, is giving an additional \$75,000 through the SBC Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, and \$25,000 through the SBC Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions as part of \$600,000 total mission giving.

He said total gifts through the church in 1984 would be about \$4.2 million, almost \$500,000 less than the budget because of the redistribution of some income for building purposes.

Letters to the Editor

Seek God's will

Editor:

Thank you for a better Baptist Record. I appreciate the articles on the editorial page. The one, "Guest opinion . . . The Southern Baptist Convention — future," in the Nov. 29 issue should be printed, several times, in every Baptist paper in our convention. All of our papers would be more profitable — for the readers — if all of those critical, divisive "letters" were omitted. The writers could spend that time seeking God's will in their own lives.

God bless you and the staff.

George T. Thompson
Summit

Who retired?

Editor:

A layman of Crestview Church, Petal, finds more to do than he has ever found since "retiring" as an electrician. His active life is totally wrapped up in "doing for others," for which he has dedicated his entire future. Carl W. Evans and his wife, Robbie, are found involved wherever you can find them.

Last December through March, '84, it was at the Baptist mission centers in Houston, Texas, where Miss Mildred McWhorter serves as director. After a short break, Bro. Carl found a job needing done at the Prospect Baptist Church pastorage in Perry County, Mississippi, the first week of June. With that completed, he found another need at the Beaumont Baptist Church pastorage, also in Perry County. Then, for one more week in Perry County: the need was found at Prospect Baptist Church.

The next week, the first of July, found Bro. Carl at the New Underwood Baptist Church in Rapid City, South Dakota. Then, to another need in his native Mississippi: Cambridge Baptist Church in Gautier, with

Richard White, pastor, taking five weeks for a completed job in hot July and August. One more need must be attended in Mississippi . . . it's to Jackson, to install a 200 AMP service for a dear widow in three days.

There's much more to be done in Houston, Texas, so off he goes in September, remaining until October 1. After a short break back home, it's back to Houston. The needs at the Baptist mission centers never see an end.

Not too far in Bro. Carl's past, he could have been found in Argentina, finding plenty to do in the name of Jesus Christ. As for his future, it remains to be seen . . . but for something positively planned: it's Honduras in February! Now, who was it who retired??? Did someone say Bro. Carl and Robbie Evans retired? It's hard to believe!

C. R. Parkin, pastor
Crestview Church
Hattiesburg

Contributions to education

Editor:

Recently an article was printed in the Baptist Record acknowledging the actions of The Education Commission in its most recent meeting. A resolution was passed unanimously acknowledging the leadership given to the Education Commission by Dr. Joe Tuten. The rotation process required that Dr. Tuten go off the Commission this year.

In reviewing the contributions of Dr. Joe Tuten to Christian higher education for Mississippi Baptists, some notable accomplishments became apparent. Dr. Tuten served on the Board of Trustees of William Carey College for the years 1959-1962, 1965-1969. He came to the Education Commission in 1972 and served 1972-1977, 1979-1984. During those

years he worked with the commission in the McGrath studies; the orientation of college trustees; the merger of Clarke College with Mississippi College; and last, but not least, the development of the Endowment Campaign, which is currently underway to raise \$40 million endowment for the three colleges and the Baptist Children's Village.

As you can see, Dr. Tuten has served well in the area of Christian higher education. It seemed to me appropriate to express publicly my personal appreciation for him and to inform Mississippi Baptists concerning the contributions Dr. Joe Tuten has made to the Kingdom work and to all of us.

Gene Henderson, Pastor
First Church, Greenville
Chairman, Education Commission
Prayer and togetherness
Editor:

As a regular reader, may I request that you print an article(s) explaining the points on which our people differ on the matter of "Inerrancy" and the opposing view as held by the so-called "Loyalists."

I fail to understand why the "Loyalists" at the recent Convention were so active in getting ready to oppose Dr. Stanley when he comes up for re-election at S.B.C. in 1985. I can be very sure that a division in our ranks will (if not already), affect our Cooperative Program giving. That division may partially account for the \$300,000 less than expected on our 1984 cooperative budget for Mississippi.

I believe that prayer and togetherness will win souls for Christ where division will not get the results we want. For this reason I strongly oppose the moves made at M.B.C. in our 149th convention by the Loyalists that could be construed as divisive.

Maurice Stringer
Ellisville

Faces And Places

by anne washburn mcwilliams

"In darkness . . . a great light"

To write a column about Christmas, I should be sitting by the fire while strains of "Silent Night" drift through the room. Outside, the snowflakes should be softly weaving a blanket to cover the fallen oak leaves. Though Mississippi weather is so full of surprises that I might see snow by the end of another week the weather doesn't now look a bit like I think Christmas ought to look. Today's high in Jackson was 80. Violets are blooming in my back yard. I guess they got mixed up and thought it was spring.

But it does feel like Christmas. I can't remember when I've had a December more full of celebrations. Everywhere I go, I feel there is a spirit of good will abroad, of generosity and love. It's enough to make me want to throw my head back and laugh and sing, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

Everywhere the shoppers run to and fro. Clerks smile and say, "Merry Christmas!" At night, the blinking of the outdoor lights blends with the twinkle of the stars. Teen-age boys ring the Salvation Army bells and in answer to the tinkle of a coin, respond with a cheery "Thank you, ma'am!"

Clinton's Christmas parade came on the first day of December. W. D. and I watched from the parking lot of the Clinton Plaza as Santa Claus arrived on the back of a fire truck. Our young neighbor, Ellen Hudson, was an elf, dressed in green and red felt.

The next night, the foggiest night I've ever driven through, I saw the "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" at Morrison Heights Church, directed by another of our neighbors, Charleene Barnette.

Christmas tree hunting, our next adventure, began to pall when I began checking price tags. (I can't bring myself to settle for an artificial tree because I like to smell the cedar and spruce. Neither can I bring myself to pay \$20 or \$30 for a tree.) W. D. said, "I know where we can find a tree for \$5." It was just right—a spruce as high as my head. I decorated it with miniature ornaments that Betty Anne

Bailey had ordered from a company that advertised in the Baptist Record. I added my straw angels from Bangladesh and the two angels Lorene Goodson brought us.

As for the gifts. In our family we began at Thanksgiving asking each other, "What do you want for Christmas?" And we've been telephoning back and forth from one state to another, "What does — want?" "What size does — wear?" "What are you going to give —?" And at the office, the Baptist Record staff always draws names. We exchanged gifts on December 4 during our party at the editor's house. Florence Larimore gave me perfume — created especially for a "winter." Gail Wood gave W. D. a box of breaded chicken breast patties.

Christmas is eating. Saturday night, W. D. and I ate supper with Speedy McWilliams, my brother-in-law, and his wife, Evelyn, at Magee. Those were the juiciest steaks I've eaten in a long time — and the good part was — they were paid for by our host! Yesterday, my friend, Rosa Hooper, invited us to Sunday lunch. And she's one of the best cooks I know. Mama's Lane Cake is a Christmas tradition we always keep.

Christmas is music. Driving to work, I listen to the carols of Christmas on the radio. One night my GAs (Heather Calhoun, Kim Stack, Kristi Kennedy, Alana Rushing, Olivia Graham, and my co-leader, Judy Richardson) went to the Country Manor Nursing Home to sing carols for my good friend, Mrs. Gertrude Lovelace, Grace's mother. (The girls sang. I listened.) Maybe Melanie Coward can go next time.

Sunday night, December 15, W. D. and I visited Oakdale Church near Brandon, where Alan Kilgore is pastor. Ruby Tullus sings in the choir there (I called her Ruby McWilliams in a column a few weeks ago, but knew all the time her name is Ruby Tullus) and had invited us to hear the church's musical. Susan Clark directed "An Old-Fashioned Christmas" in the beautiful way that is "especially Susan."

Yesterday morning, my pastor, Kermit McGregor, stirred our hearts with the reading of the sweetest story ever told. He began with Genesis, the story of the creation and the story of man's fall. He skipped over to Isaiah and read prophecies of Jesus' birth and crucifixion. From Matthew, he read the story of his birth, of his teachings in the Beatitudes, of his death and resurrection, and then closed with the words in Matthew 6, from the Lord's Prayer. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isa. 9:2).

In chapel last Friday, as Dr. Kelly was leading the prayer time, he said, "There's one question I want you to think about. What if Jesus had not been born? What if he had not come to earth?"

How dark the darkness would be.



The man and the birds

The Christmas Story . . . the God-born-in-a-manger and all that . . . escapes some moderns. Mostly, I think, because they seek complex answers to their questions, and this one is so utterly simple. For the cynics, the skeptics and the unconvinced I submit a modern parable.

This is about a modern man. One of us. He was not a Scrooge. He was a kind, decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family, upright in his dealings with other men. But he did not believe in all that Incarnation stuff which the churches proclaim at Christmas time. It just didn't make sense and he was too honest to pretend otherwise.

He just could not swallow the Jesus story. About God coming to earth as man.

"I am truly sorry to distress you," he told his wife, "but I am not going with you to church this Christmas Eve." He said he'd feel like a hypocrite. That he would much rather stay home. But that he would wait up for them.

He stayed. They went.

Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall.

He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier, then went back to his fireside chair and began to read his newspaper.

Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. Then another, then another.

At first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window.

When he went to the front door to investigate, he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They had been caught in the storm and in a desperate search for shelter had tried to fly through his large landscape window.

Well . . . he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze.

He remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter if he could direct the birds to it.

He quickly put on coat, galoshes. Tramped through the deepening snow to the barn.

He opened the doors wide and turned on a light.

But the birds did not come in.

He figured food would entice them in and he hurried back to the house, fetched breadcrumbs, sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail to the yellow-lighted wide-open doorway of the stable.

But to his dismay the birds ignored the breadcrumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow.

He tried catching them.

He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them waving his arms. Instead they scattered in every direction — except into the warm, lighted barn.

Then he realized they were afraid of him. "To them," he reasoned, "I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know they can trust me, that I'm not trying to hurt them, but to help them."

How?

Any move he made tended to frighten them, confuse them. They just would not follow . . . they would not be led or shooed because they feared him.

If only I could be a bird myself, he thought.

If only I could be a bird and mingle with them and speak their language and tell them not to be afraid and show them the way to the safe, warm barn.

But I'd have to be one of them . . . so they could see . . . and hear and understand . . .

At that moment, the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind.

He stood there . . . listening to the bells . . . Adeste Fidelis . . . listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas . . .

And he sank to his knees in the snow.

—Anonymous

—Reprinted from Charity and Children





Children gather for Bible study under a tree at Pampoete, Mexico. (The house in the background is built of cactus stalks)



Billy Bridges leads in a worship service, in a house in the village of Narise, near Sonoita, Mexico.

'Christmas angels' are bound for Mexico

By Anne Washburn McWilliams

If Christmas means love in action, then Christmas is on the way to some villages in the desert of north Mexico.

Twelve, or more, Mississippians are getting ready to celebrate Christmas on the Arizona-Mexico border. In Jeff Davis, Simpson, Jasper, Smith, and Covington counties, they are packing toys, clothes, medicine, baby formula, vitamins, candles, blankets, mattresses, food. . . . A Rankin County pediatrician is preparing to send baby formula. Sammy and Delores Myers are stacking a room in their house at Carson, ceiling high, with clothing—gifts from individuals and churches—waiting to gladden the hearts of some Mexican children and their parents.

To every desert village family they visit they will give three gal. of beans and 22 lb. of flour. Each village has been surveyed (one has 41 families), so no one will be left out.

These "Christmas angels" will leave December 20, for Agua Prieta, Mexico, at least 1,600 miles from Mississippi. They expect to stay until Jan. 5. "We will hand these items out personally," Myers said. "We have always been good stewards of every item donated, and we will continue to be. We believe that donated items should be handed to those in need and not stored for long periods of time."

There are a reported 600,000 people living in an area 50 miles deep and parallel to the Arizona-Mexico border. It is an area of extreme poverty, and one touched by little mission work. Eighty-two people from Mississippi in the past 12 months have been involved in this mission effort from Jeff Davis and surrounding counties. Sammy Myers, who owns the Myers Nursery at Carson, is a leader in the proceedings. He and his wife, Delores, have gone on Mexico mission trips six times this year, and will spend Christmas there, on an errand of mercy.

The Mississippi teams cooperate with Arizona Baptists in this border ministry, and have followed suggestions offered by Amos V. Coffey, director of their Language Missions Department.

Five years ago, Sammy Myers went with a volunteer team to sheetrock a church in Arizona. They arrived in the wake of a flood, and went over to Mexico to take a look at the damage. He was so touched and overwhelmed, he said, by the poverty he saw that he resolved to return and to do what he could for those people. "You think you've seen poverty in Mississippi? I have, too—but none as bad as that in the Mexican desert." A barbed wire fence across the sand marks the international border. Less than 100 yards south of it stand houses made of cactus stalks lashed together, no floor, barest essentials of furniture.

Myers made many other volunteer mission trips—to New Hampshire, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Nevada—mostly

to do construction work. But always his thoughts kept turning to the people in the Mexican desert, and he said he felt that the Holy Spirit was leading him to spend his time and efforts for them. Over the past few years, he and others with him have worked in 10 villages. They usually stay in inexpensive motels in Arizona and drive over into Mexico during the days. They strive to minister to physical and spiritual needs.



Clothing bags are packed ceiling high at the Myers house.

In March some Mississippi high school and college students and Royal Ambassadors went. Several times, nurses have gone to distribute medicines. They have found people using such home remedies as coconut for worms and herbs on the feet for sore throat. (Myers said that groups of Baptist Women, or others interested in helping, will be needed in future trips to help divide and package medicine ready to send.) "We know of at least two babies that would have died without these nurses'

help," said Myers. Three nurses who went were Mrs. Phyllis Ratcliff, Sauls Valley Church; Becky Douglas, Newhebron; and Elaine Boone, Covington County. One baby they examined had failed to grow. The mother had been told that this was due to an injury at birth. However, the nurses felt that it was malnutrition; they left a supply of baby formula. Next time they visited, the baby had begun to grow, and its arms and legs to fill out. "Seeing this one thing was worth everything we have ever done," Myers said.

"There are no garbage dumps in the desert around Sonoita," he added, "because there's no garbage to dump. Everything is used."

Because of meager rainfall, there are few trees, and wood is scarce. The cactus or rough adobe houses are unheated. Walls gape with enormous holes. Cook stoves are made from oil drums, partially filled with sand and burning one stick of wood at the time. Many people have no beds, and no blankets, though the temperature sometimes falls to 25.

Beans and tortillas are the mainstay of most. Some have deep wells; others drink from cisterns. One village either had to haul water six miles, or use water from a shallow mudhole, Myers said. The citizens would dip out water, wash their clothes, and then dump the water back into the hole, not to waste it. Others live near irrigation ditches, where they wash clothes and selves.

Last June a volunteer group built a roof on a house for a Christian woman they came to know as Mrs. Julio. Her roof had fallen through onto her bed. Fortunately, she was in the yard at the time of the accident. Hard rains, when they do come, can easily wash away the flimsy houses.

Everywhere they have gone, the Mississippians have found the Mexicans receptive to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In every village, Bible studies are held by the teams, often under

any available tree. Under "Pala Verde," one of the largest trees in the area, many professions of faith have been made; many children have come to hear the Bible stories. "We don't know how many," Myers said.

(Continued on page 9)

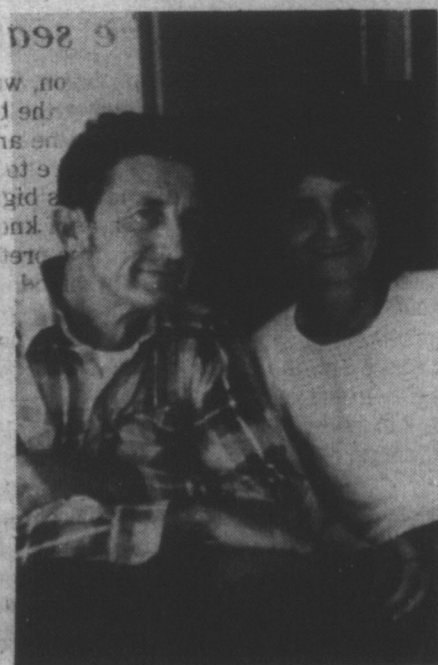


Six from Mississippi who in November carried medicine, toys, and clothing to villages in north Mexico are Becky Douglas, Mrs. Elaine Bridges (mother of Billy Bridges, who is now living in Mexico and preaching in missions there), Sammy and Delores Myers, and Pastor and Mrs. James Bailey of Victory Church, Jeff Davis County.

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Sammy and Delores Myers

*"And the roof
came tumbling down . . ."*



Mrs. Julio's rooftop fell in . . .



on her bed.



Mrs. Julio was sleeping outside when a team from Mississippi arrived and repaired the roof.



In Mrs. Julio's kitchen, a Mexican boy eats a candy sucker brought him from Mississippi.

'Angels' on way to Mexico

(Continued from page 8)

"We are not trying to set any records. We just want to help wherever we can, in every way we can."

Though quite a few say they are Catholics, they do not have any Catholic services nearby, and the priest comes only once a year. Myers photographed a small statue of Mary, in a niche on top of a mountain near Sonora. Offerings had been left beside it, so that the priest in his visit might pick them up.

"They need Bible training badly," said Delores Myers. One woman thought she would have to pay \$10 to be baptized. (This was what her acquaintances usually paid the priest for a baptismal service.) Delores explained to her the meaning of baptism and the woman exclaimed, "That is beautiful! Why has no one ever told me before that is what baptism means?"

On the Christmas trip will go 1,000 New Testaments (printed by a company in Louisiana for 25¢ each). "We could use a thousand complete Bibles," said Myers. "They sell at El Paso (Baptist Spanish Publishing House) for \$5.50 each."

When a group went in August, a young man who had been called into the ministry — Billy Bridges from Whitesand Church — was with them. It was his second trip. This time he looked for a suitable spot at Sonora to park a travel trailer; he planned to move his family there and stay to preach. In October, a group took two

vans and a trailer, all loaded with baby beds, high chairs, cradles, and children's clothes, to give away. The trailer was for the Bridges family to live in (Billy and Wendy and their two children). Right away Billy began services at Narise. Twelve came the first day, and attendance has already increased to 40. A Florida layman who has provided some Bibles, and many other items, now says he will pay for the cost of building a church. The search is on for some land on which to build.

How have they talked in Spanish? Some took lessons. And most have picked up a lot of words. "You'd be surprised how you learn terms," Delores said. And they have an interpreter, 17-year-old Alberto Rivera, Mexican, preaching volunteer. "I hope he can come to study at Clarke some time," said Sammy.

Because the nursery work is seasonal and they own their own business, Myers said he and Delores have been able to find the time to go. They grew up in the Carson Church. Several of their five children and six grandchildren have also been with them on the trips at one time or another.

Having left flower and vegetable seeds at many Mexican homes, he was greeted on a return one day by a woman who said, in excitement, "Come and look at my flowers!" What he saw was a turnip patch.

"Those are not flowers," he told her. "You can eat them!" After he

told her how to cook them, her family has been enjoying turnips and greens. Rolling the vegetables in tortillas, the children eat turnip green sandwiches!

Myers speaks in many Mississippi churches, and shows slides of the work, for he said he longs for others to go and feel the joy in giving that he has found. "Lots of retired people could pack up and go with us," he said, "and read the Bible to those Mexican children. They would find it a happy, rewarding experience."

Some who have gone have come back to Mississippi, he said, and realized there are children around Carson, in Jeff Davis County, who don't know any Bible stories either. And they have gotten together Mississippi children, sat under trees, and told them Bible stories. "They have realized what missions is all about."

Since many have given sacrificially to help in this project, he said he feels responsibility to use the money properly and wisely. "One old black lady opened a jar and gave me ten dollars worth of pennies."

"God grows what is out there in that nursery," he said. "And so we love to use what he has given us, for him. Our children are grown. We have the time. And we love to share with these people."

"I was not called to preach. But there is plenty for me to do. I am doing this for him."

And that's how he's going to celebrate Christmas.

SCRAPBOOK

A Christmas Proclamation

Can we proclaim a Merry Christmas?

If we spend it all in vain,
Who will get the blessed greeting?
If there is no joyous train.
If we cannot hear a carol,
And the spark dies from the light,
And no mistletoe is hanging,
Above the door this Holy night:
If the blessing of our giving
Were forbidden ever more,
And we all had to listen
To fireworks from another shore!

Pray for Christmas, Merry Christmas
With a carol in each song,
With each voice loudly blending,
For the time is not too long:
Listen and you hear them singing;
Lo, they are nearing now —
With a radiance in the echo;
And a crown on each brow!
Soon there'll be no little toy,
And no thought of Christmas day,
Coming is a bright new joy:
And an everlasting Christmas Way!
Make this the Merriest Christmas ever

For nevermore can it be;
Like it was in yesteryears —
Celebrated in old-fashioned glee!
Make this the holiest Holiday ever
With glad tidings of good-will;
Singing holy songs of glory,
With holy gladness still:
Pray that peace and hope may
brighten,
And every nation's love will flow;
As we cast our hearts and listen,
For the footsteps in the snow!

—Bessie Grantham
Richland

Last search of the season

With the most beautiful season of the year
upon us,
Mama's four smallest children would
find our way into the woods.
We knew where the largest hickory nut trees stood.
We'd gather nuts by the sackful to be used
in Mama's holiday cakes
(The cakes of Christmas and New Year's).
We took our time exploring the freshly
painted leaves.
With their colors of red, gold,
purple, and yellow, they were breath taking.
Roy would often fall; he was just a little fellow.
But we'd take our time in helping
him along.
Going to the old grape vine swing,
once again we'd give ourselves another fling —
out over the big hollow and back.
Then remembering our ridy-horse pine,
we'd head for it to find
it was still bent low from our rides
in summer time.

Starting on, we'd stop along the way
to gather the beautiful leaves,
limbs blithe and bold.
These were to be put
in Mama's big bowl.
Then, as if knowing full well (and we did),
where the prettiest little
fir tree stood —
We'd take Papa's old worn hatchet,
and finding the tree,
we'd chop at it, one by one,
till it fell.
With one carrying the nuts,
another the limbs of pretty leaves,
and the other two wagging the tree;
We'd make our way home, up the steep hill,
where Mama waited
at the little green bungalow,
for her youngest, Roy, and her other three.
Tired we were, but happy,
Winnie, Hoy, and me.
—Velma A. Windham, Taylorsville

3,000 students to go to MISSION 85

NASHVILLE — Nearly 3,000 students have registered for the four-day national missions conference at Opryland Hotel in Nashville Dec. 28-31. More than 100 home and foreign missionaries will participate in MISSION 85 to help the students learn more about Southern Baptist missions efforts.

The conference is sponsored by national student ministries of the Sunday School Board, the Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board, Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood Commission, and the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

"MISSION 85 should be a time of exploration and reflection on how students might fit in mission activities at their church, BSU or individually," said Bill Lee, assistant director of the special mission ministries department at the Home Mission Board.

"There is an urgency for this

generation to realize a need for personal involvement in missions," said Charles Beckett, assistant to the vice president of human resources at the Foreign Mission Board.

"No other conference will be more significant in producing future leadership for the accomplishment of Bold Mission Thrust," said Charles Johnson, secretary of national student ministries of the Sunday School Board.

Beckett said the presence of missionary leaders can help students think about their own personal involvement in missions. "We hope this will help students learn where they fit in," he explained.

During the last nationwide student missions conference held in December 1979, more than 500 participants committed themselves to short-term or career missions.

Staff Changes

Dennis Ray Smith has accepted a call to First Church, Pascagoula as minister of youth and activities.



Smith is a graduate of William Carey College and formerly served at Cartersville Church. He also served as athletic director of Petal High School. He is married to the former Cheri Causey of Petal. They have two children.

Tommy Jarrett has accepted the call to the pastorate of First Church, Macon. Jarrett, a native of Greenwood, served in Lynchburg, Va. for the past five years. He received a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary, and is working toward the doctoral degree. Jarrett is married to Sandra Kerr, and they have three children. She is the daughter of Horace Kerr, who is now at the Sunday School Board in Nashville.

William Shaw has accepted the call to Glendale Church, Greenville, as minister of music and education. Shaw graduated from Delta State with B.S. in music, N.O. Seminary with M.R.E. He served churches in South Carolina, Texas, La., and Miss. for the past 25 years.

Off the Record

Mom: What did you do at the party, Lisa?

Lisa: We sang the refrigerator song.

Mom: How does that song go?

Lisa: Freeze a jolly good fellow.

Mississippi Baptist activities

Dec. 27-28 Youth Evangelism Conference; Mississippi College, Clinton; 1 p.m., 27th-4:45 p.m., 28th (EVAN)

Arnold Chavers has moved to Crosby and has begun his pastorate there.

Alvin Hall is new pastor of Ebenezer Church, Mississippi Association. He lives at Ethel, La.

Thomas Reeb has accepted the pastorate of Bay Vista Church, Gulf Coast. He goes from Morningside Church, Shreveport, La., where he was associate pastor.

Lakeshore Church, Gulf Coast, has called Don Bradley as pastor. He is a student at Baptist Bible Institute, Graceville, Fla. He succeeds Winfred Easley at Lakeshore.

Olivet Church, Gulf Coast, has called Joe Wofford as minister of music. He formerly served in a similar capacity at Commission Road Church.

Shoreline Park, Gulf Coast, has called Peter Kendrick as pastor.

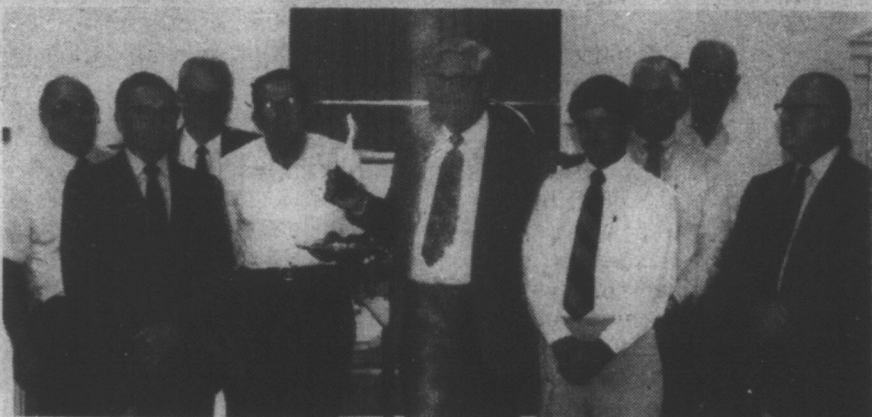
Woolmarket Church, Gulf Coast, has called Wayne Henning as education director.

Terry Farmer has accepted the pastorate of Newport Baptist Church, Newport, N.C. and he and his family are moving there this month. Farmer, a native of Senatobia, Miss., was graduated from Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex., in May, 1984. He is also a graduate of University of Mississippi. Formerly he was pastor of the Corinth Church, Ravena, Tex. He and his wife, the former Marian Taylor of Holly Springs (a graduate of MUW), have four children.

Just for the Record



Lollar's Grove Church, Webster County, on Aug. 5 held special services commemorating the centennial of the church. Members dressed in old-fashioned attire and a history of the church was presented by the church clerk, Mrs. Elizabeth Fulham. The pastor, Stanley Dorroh, brought the centennial message. The pastor presented a certificate from the Baptist Historical Commission to the members of the centennial committee. Pictured, left to right, members of the committee are Bobby Newland, Pearl Golden, Erma Montroy, Avalon Littlejohn, and Stanley Dorroh, pastor.



Poplar Flat Church, Louisville, recently burned a symbol of their indebtedness. The note was made in 1972 for the purpose of remodeling the church buildings and the purchase of a pastor's home. Pictured, left to right are, Troy Williamson, Burton Taylor, Danny Bryant, pastor, Leonard Ellis, Bob Clark, Dale McNeil, Roy Roberts, John Henry Cockrell, and Perry Luncford.



Members of Houston Road Church, Jones County, purchased five acres of land adjoining the church property. No money was borrowed from the bank. Jimmy Hood, pastor, challenged each member to have a willing heart and bring their offerings to the Lord just as the children of Israel did in Exodus 35. After a 24-hour prayer vigil, the true meaning of a Victory Sunday was made real. On Nov. 18 the church was blessed with a monetary victory.



Antioch Church, Simpson County, presented members with perfect attendance pins. Dewayne, 12, and David Purvis, 10, have never missed a day in Sunday School in their lives. Joe Heath and his two daughters, Pam and Mandy with 8 years and his wife Sally and their son Shea with 7 year pins. Mrs. Carlena Lewis has 11 years with Frank Bennett having 12 years perfect attendance. Robert Walker is pastor. Pictured, 1 to r, bottom row, Dewayne Purvis, Mandy Heath, David Purvis, Pam Heath, and Shea Heath. Top row, 1 to r, Joe Heath, Sally Heath, Carlena Lewis, and Frank Bennett.

Harrisville Church, Harrisville, will present "An Old Fashioned Christmas," Sunday, Dec. 23, 11:00 a.m., in the church sanctuary. The Harrisville sanctuary, youth and children's choirs will sing this great celebration of holiday carols and a cast of Christmas characters will come alive as they experience the real meaning of Christmas. Sammy J. McDonald, minister of music and education.

Calvary Church, Braxton, choir will present Christmas cantata along with orchestra, Sunday, Dec. 23, at 11:00 a.m. First, Hazlehurst, youth choir will present a musical program at 7:00 p.m. Dec. 23 at Calvary church, Braxton. Henry J. Bennett, pastor.

The Singing Christmas Tree of Alta Woods Church, Jackson, will present Christmas Rhapsody, along with members of the Jackson Symphony Orchestra. The program will be presented Sat., Dec. 22, 7 p.m. and Sun., Dec. 23, 6 p.m. Frank Stovall, director.

Corinth Church, Jasper County, will have "Watch Night Services," Dec. 31, 7 p.m. until around midnight. There will be preaching and singing. Edd Holloman, pastor.

Six men will be ordained as deacons at Harrisburg Church, Tupelo, Sun. Jan. 13. They are Harry Armstrong, Paul Fairley, David "Bubba" Maddox, Donny Richey, Gill Simmons, and Charles "Smokey" Young. These six are part of the 52 men that make up the active deacon body of Harrisburg Church.

Emogene Harris, missionary to Nigeria, has arrived in the States for furlough (address: Box 290, Cato Rd., Brandon, Miss. 39042). A native of Johns, she was appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1960.

Revival results

Center Hill, Hamilton (Monroe Association) recently held its fall revival with Gary Bowlin of Brandon as evangelist. There were 22 professions of faith and over 50 other decisions. Don Nerren, pastor.

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Tax plan would axe housing benefits

WASHINGTON (BP) — Besides establishing what many religious leaders feel would amount to a disincentive to charitable giving, the Treasury Department tax simplification plan would also do away with ministers' housing benefits.

Under the plan unveiled by Secretary of the Treasury Donald T. Regan, clergy housing allowances would be shelved by striking from the Internal Revenue Code a 1954 provision designed to create tax equity in clergy housing.

By doing away with clergy housing allowances altogether the Treasury proposal would resolve a nearly two-year dispute over a 1983 IRS decision to deny clergy the normal deductions for mortgage interest and real estate taxes to the extent these expenses were paid from a tax-exempt housing allowance.

Donald H. Morgan, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Annuity Board, reacted strongly to the proposal, declaring it would have "a devastating impact on ministers, particularly those who have lived in parsonages all their active careers and are having to buy or rent homes for the first time in retirement."

Annuity Board general counsel Gary Nash also pointed to other provisions in the Treasury Department's plan that would have a negative im-

pact on other "fringe benefits" currently enjoyed by ministers as well as others. Benefits which would no longer be excluded from taxable income under the Treasury Department proposal include health insurance above caps of \$175 monthly for family coverage and \$70 monthly for individual coverage, group-term life insurance, and employer-provided death benefits.

Secretary Regan's massive set of recommendations, filling three thick volumes, has been presented to President Reagan for review. The president thus far has given no indication which of the many proposals he will accept before sending a comprehensive tax reform package to Congress early next year.

Also Southern Baptist leaders are reacting with concern and perplexity to the provision in the Treasury Department's comprehensive tax reform plan which would allow deductions for charitable contributions only after they exceed two percent of the taxpayer's adjusted gross income.

Baptist officials interviewed by Baptist Press for initial reactions to the plan sent to President Reagan by Treasury Secretary Regan Nov. 28 expressed fear the plan would curtail giving to churches, church-related institutions, and other charitable causes. Their criticisms ranged from philosophical to practical.

Vandercook accepts Virginia call

Paul Vandercook, who has for ten years been director of language ministries for Gulf Coast Association, has resigned to accept the position as executive director of the Middle District Baptist Association in Virginia. The change will be effective Jan. 1.

Vandercook and his wife, Fran, are moving to Chesterfield County, Va. During the ten years that Vandercook has served on the Gulf Coast, a Seamen's Center ministry has been

established. The association under his leadership has helped to begin a Spanish Mission, Filipino Mission, Korea Mission, and Vietnamese Mission.

"Now these language congregations are moving toward self support and membership in the association on a par with the 56 other churches in the association," reports Gulf Coast director of missions, Bobby Perry.

Middle District Association has 36 churches spread over three counties. One of the counties, Chesterfield, is a suburb of the city of Richmond. The county has been listed as the tenth fastest growing county in population in the U.S.

Southwestern grants most doctorates ever

FORT WORTH, Texas — The largest number of doctoral degrees in a Southwestern Seminary commencement were scheduled to be awarded Dec. 14 at the Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

Thirty doctorates were among 332 degrees awarded.

In that number were six doctor of philosophy degrees, eight doctorates

doctor of ministry degrees. David Lynn Finnell, a native of Jackson and a missionary to Singapore, received a doctorate in education.

Other Mississippi graduates: Master of Arts in Religious Education—Eddie B. Baker, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Baker of Tupelo; Master of Divinity—John Harlon Cockrell, son of Loretta Cockrell of Magee; Master of Arts in Religious Education—Lynda Dianne Sneed, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. B. E. Sneed of Belden; Master of Divinity—Danny Karl Wilson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Troy L. Wilson Jr. of Corinth.

John Havlik dies after surgery

ATLANTA (BP)—John F. Havlik, retired director of evangelism education and writing for the Home Mission Board, died Dec. 10 of a heart attack following quintuple bypass surgery a week earlier.

Havlik, 67, had worked with the nation-wide Baptist mission board for 17 years before his retirement in March, 1982. Previously, he was director of evangelism for Baptist state conventions in Louisiana (1961-64) and Kansas (1956-61), and was adjunct professor of evangelism at Midwestern Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

The native of Milwaukee, Wisc., was a graduate of Baylor University, Southern Seminary, and Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City. Survivors include his wife, Anna Mae Havlik of Atlanta; a daughter, Mrs. Brenda Roach of Atlanta; two sisters and a brother in Oklahoma.

Services were scheduled at Patterson Cascade Hill Funeral Home, Atlanta, Dec. 13. The family requested contributions be made to the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board hunger relief fund in lieu of flowers.

Barefoot Springs will dedicate education building

A new education building at Barefoot Springs Church, Route one, Pelahatchie, will be dedicated on Sunday Jan. 27, at 3 p.m.

Wilson Winstead, moderator of the Rankin County Association, will be guest speaker. J. C. Renfro, director of missions, Rankin County, will also have a part on the program. The pastor, Elton Moore, and the Barefoot congregation, extend an invitation to other churches and friends to join them on this occasion.

The building committee is composed of the following: Charles Stevenson, Bobby Boling, James Earl Walters, Dalton Scales, and William Purvis.

'New Day for Singles' conference coming soon

A singles conference to be held Jan. 25 and 26 at Alta Woods Church, Jackson, will have as its theme, "A New Day for Singles."

The conference will begin at 7 p.m., with registration beginning at 6 p.m., Jan. 25 and will end at 4 p.m., Jan. 26.

The featured speakers will be Ann Gardner and J. Clark Hensley. Miss Gardner is the consultant for singles with the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.

Hensley is the executive director emeritus of the Christian Action Commission, Mississippi Baptist Convention. He headed the commission for 16 years and was a leader in developing work with singles across the Southern Baptist Convention. He is the author of *Help For Single Parents* and those who love them and *Coping With Being Single Again*.

Thursday, December 20, 1984

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 11



Molly and Elven Fairchild are pictured with the Sing family in India. The Sings took the Fairchilds to see the Golden Temple at Amritsar. Mrs. Sing is wearing a sari, the traditional dress of India. Molly is wearing a punjabi, traditional dress of the Punjab.

Molly Fairchild to speak on TV about India

Molly Fairchild of Moselle will appear on the WDAM-TV, Channel 7, Mid Day Show at Hattiesburg at 12:15 p.m., Jan. 7. She will show slides and talk about the crisis in India. Mrs. Fairchild and her husband, Elven, were serving as volunteer missionaries in the Punjab when and where the Golden Temple was fired into. Heavy curfews, enforced to reduce terrorism, curtailed their work.

As terrorist activities increased, and several VIPs were assassinated, all foreigners were asked to leave, and the Fairchilds returned to the U.S. They live in Moselle, are staff members of Calvary Church, Hattiesburg, and still travel as evangelists. They plan to return to India as soon as visas can be obtained.



J. N. Holloway and Jimmy Porter

Plaque notes 50 years

First Church, Louisville, recently honored J. N. Holloway on his completion of 50 years in the gospel ministry. Jimmy Porter, pastor of the church, presented to Holloway a plaque in appreciation for his services during these years, and presented Mrs. Holloway a corsage.

Holloway was ordained by First Church, Clinton. He has served as pastor of a number of churches and as director of missions in several associations. He retired a few years ago. He and Mrs. Holloway are now living in Louisville, where they are members of First Baptist Church.

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Baptist Record

- Uniform: *The Word of Life*
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- Bible Book: *The birth and childhood of Jesus*

The birth and childhood of Jesus

By Vernon L. Sikes, Yazoo City
Luke 2:1-52

A classic puzzler throughout history lies in the mystery surrounding God's exultation of the meek while mankind does homage to the powerful. Man simply cannot comprehend why God works in inconspicuous ways when the whole world seems to be geared to pageantry and pretense.

Many centuries before God sent the Savior that he had promised, Isaiah prophesied that mankind would not understand. The king would be "despised and rejected by men" because God was working a master plan that was unintelligible to man. Let's examine the elements of this misunderstanding.

I. The people

A king was to be born, a king whose coming had been hailed for many centuries. In this person, countless numbers of persecuted Jews and Gentiles had constructed their ideas of deliverance. How they looked to the day when the royal birth would be announced and the nations of the earth would fall helplessly at their feet amid the pomp and circumstance of the occasion.

But to their dismay, God chose quite another method of his Son's entrance. Rather than being born the son of wealthy parents, he came into this world as the son of two common, flesh and blood, people. Mary and

Joseph's entrance into Bethlehem before his birth certainly lacked any splendor as did their accommodations for the night of his birth.

Of importance too is God's choice of who were to be the first, apart from Mary and Joseph, to know of the king's arrival. One would think that God would make an announcement of such magnitude to the kings of the world's nations. They were the powerful and wealthy ones. Yes, news that grand certainly deserved royal notice. But God thought differently! The first public announcement was made to a group of low class people, unclean people (VV. 8-14). God wanted these who were on the bottom of the economic ladder to be the first to know. This king was a king for all men — rich or poor; black or white; powerful or weak.

In Jerusalem, there were two humble and religious people who longed to see the Messiah — Anna and Simeon (VV. 29-40). No doubt there had been many influential people to visit Jesus during those first weeks, but notice that Luke singled out these to record. Certainly the accounts of the visits from the ranks of nobility would have made more interesting copy. We love to read about how the rich live.

What Simeon and Anna had was special. It was something that was il-

lustrative of what God wanted all men to have — an unceasing hope in the Lord. These two were special not because of their position in the world, but because of their recognition of their need for Christ.

II. The plan

The Lord submitted himself to be born amid the lowliest of surroundings, which was hardly what the people expected. Man did not understand it, but then, God's plan of the revelation of his Son's purpose was larger than man. They wanted a king with "class"; he sent one who could relate to all men.

Though we have few recorded incidents in Jesus' childhood, we can assume that he spent much time in the Temple listening to the teachings (VV. 41-52). As a king, he could have frequented the best places of the day, but he chose to live and to endure the trials that are common to ordinary people. He grew in his greatness by "listening to them (the religious teachers) and asking them questions" (V.46) and he "increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man" (v.52).

I certainly cannot take all the credit for these past six months of lessons. I want to say a special thanks to Earl Barfield, Rosalyn Glascoe, and Jim

The Word of Life

By Bobby Lee, Tupelo
John 1:1-18

In verse one, John mentions the "Word." The Bible is God's written word. Jesus Christ is God's living word. The words "In the beginning" refer to the beginning of creation, not to the beginning of Jesus. (See John 8:56-58 and Hebrews 7:3).

Jesus was pre-existent with God the Father. He was the agent of creation. (See Colossians 1:16-17 and Hebrews 1:2). Jesus was the creator of life; he is the re-creator of eternal life.

There are several interpretations to verse five. Whichever way you interpret it, Jesus was misunderstood and rejected.

Verse six refers to John the Baptist. John was six months older than Jesus and was a cousin of Jesus. John was to be a witness for Jesus. So are we. By our lips and by our lives. The reason for our witness is so that all might believe in Jesus.

John says in verse 11 that "He

came unto his own, and his own received him not." Why did his own not receive him? The Jews were looking for a Messiah. But they were looking for a Messiah who would set up an earthly kingdom and rule over them. Even the disciples, after spending three years with Jesus, were still looking for an earthly kingdom. (See Acts 1:6).

The Jews were looking for a political Messiah who would be a conqueror, not someone who would be born in a stable, be a suffering servant, and die on a cross! But the cross was the method Jesus chose, and so the Jews would not accept this type of Messiah.

In verse 12, John gives two simple steps to becoming "son of God." The two steps are: believe and receive. (See Romans 8:14-17).

In verse 13, John lists three negatives to the new birth. First, he says, "not of blood." This means that you cannot inherit, physically, from your parents, eternal life. (See Matthew 3:9). Second, he says, "nor of the will of the flesh." This means that no fleshly power can bring eternal life. Third, John says, "nor of the will of man." Man does not seek God of his own will. God seeks man.

One of the most amazing statements in the Bible is, "The word was made flesh." He became what we are in order to make us what he is. If we want to know anything about God, we only need to look at Jesus. (See John 14:7-11). It is all because of God's amazing grace. (See I Corinthians 15:10).

What we know about God has been revealed to us by God. We can know nothing about God except what he chooses to reveal to us. His full and complete revelation of himself was in Jesus Christ. When John says, "No man has seen God at any time," the meaning is that we have not seen God in all of his glory and fullness.

The shepherds

By Charles E. Myers, Jackson
Luke 2:8-20

It seems quite fitting that our lesson for this Sunday just before Christmas should be centered in those people who were the first ones, aside from the parents, to see the Christ child. It was a very memorable Christmas to them. These men were shepherds taking care of sheep on a hillside just outside the city of Bethlehem. Shepherds taking care of sheep was a common sight in Judea. Some have said this particular group was taking care of sheep being raised for sacrificial worship services in the temple at Jerusalem. This would make them a special group of shepherds. This could be true, though it is not necessarily so. God certainly did not limit himself to those who were a part of the Jewish religious community. There were doubtless many devout men who were shepherds aside from the groups who kept temple sheep.

On this particular night they had bedded the sheep down in a circle and had built a fire. The fire was for warmth and to keep animals away from the circle of sheep. The men were probably engaged in conversation as would be natural. They could have been talking politics, religion, or any of a number of things that interested them. Suddenly an angel stands beside them and all of them are seized with fear. This is the natural reaction. Think how we would feel if an angel stood beside us. We could not get away from the spot fast

enough.

The angel spoke quietly, telling them not to be afraid. He had not come to hurt them in any fashion. Rather he had come to bring good news. That news is that God had that night fulfilled his promise to Israel and sent the Messiah. The proof of what he was telling them was to be found in Bethlehem. They could go there and in a manger they would find a baby wrapped in swaddling. There were probably other babies born in Bethlehem that night, but only one in a manger. This one is the Christ child, the promised Messiah.

These men had to be familiar with the scriptures to understand the significance of what the angel was saying. In them God had made promises to his people and the Messiah was central in those promises. The angel said that the Messiah had been born. Then suddenly the whole heaven seemed to be filled with angels, their wings fluttering to keep them afloat, and they joined in the most beautiful chorus these men had ever heard. They were singing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Then as suddenly as they had come, they were gone, leaving behind an eerie silence.

It probably took a while for the men to recover their composure and then one of them said, "Let's go see what

he was talking about." And forgetting their sheep and everything else, they ran as fast as they could into the city, running from one place to another until they found the manger with the baby in it, just as the angel had said. In excited tones, they told Mary and Joseph what had happened and then fell on their knees and worshipped the child. These were humble men of deep faith who had believed God and found the Christ. What a tremendous experience. Mary listened, remembered again how the angel had first come to her, and put these sacred experiences in her heart to be used in times of trial and distress that lay ahead.

As much as these men wanted to stay here, that could not be. They would just be in the way here and they had responsibilities of their own. So they left and went back to their sheep. Luke tells us there were two things that characterized these men. They shared with their friends what they had seen and heard. The scripture says they shared abroad, or made known what they had seen and people who heard them wondered about it. We do not know the exact response of the people, but that is not the important part. The important thing is these shepherds told others about their experience. The other thing Luke tells us is that they returned to their work glorifying and praising God. Theirs had been a wonderful experience, one

that is difficult to comprehend. They had seen angels and in truth seen God. They are still shepherds, but they are shepherds who are different because of their experience. So with all of their beings they praise God.

These men certainly set a good example for us for this Christmas season. In the first place, they found Christ. They did not let the wonderful experience with angels be an end within itself. Rather they let it serve the purpose of leading them to Christ. Our need is to do the same. We must not let all of the things connected with Christmas, as good as many of them are, become the end for us. Rather we must let them point us to Christ. And we must not be satisfied until in reality we have been with him.

In the second place, they shared the experience with others. So must we. There is no other experience a person has that can compare with being with Christ. To have the experience and not share it with others is to be too selfish to love. We must share his love. And finally these men praised and glorified God. In the weeks and months that follow Christmas we ought to be so grateful for our spiritual experience that the desires of our heart are to honor God. And if we really find the Christ we will praise God. Let's seek to have the kind of Christmas these shepherds had that very first Christmas.

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